

# *Handbook* FOR THE NEWLY BLINDED





AMERICAN FOUNDATION  
FOR THE BLIND INC.



# *Handbook* FOR THE NEWLY BLINDED

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# HANDBOOK FOR THE NEWLY BLINDED

## FOREWORD

Since the beginning of the war, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery has been cognizant of the special problems which it faced in the provision of medical rehabilitation and educational and vocational guidance services for the severely wounded casualties of this war.

Among the group of severely wounded who have been the deep concern of the Bureau are the men who have lost part or all of their sight. In accordance with the President's directive, a comprehensive service for blinded personnel was organized. The United States Naval Hospital at Philadelphia was designated as the training center for blinded personnel of the United States Navy and Marine Corps and a staff of specialists was assembled to carry on the program of training and readjustment for the newly blinded men. A cooperative arrangement was made with The New York Institute for the Education of the Blind in New York City for assistance in counseling and guiding the newly blinded and in aiding in the training of staff. The best thinking and leadership in the field of services to the blind was consulted and utilized in giving to these men every possible assistance in their social adjustment.

This Manual, which is the joint product of the staff of the United States Naval Hospital in Philadelphia and the staff of The New York Institute for the Education of the Blind in New York City, is one of the many contributions which interested teachers and workers have made to our blinded personnel. The Manual was designed as a practical guide for the blind man himself as he faces the many new problems of living. It likewise will be of service to members of his family, who, if they are sincere in their desire to be of real help, may make a substantial contribution to the man's permanent recovery to normal productive living.



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# INTRODUCTION

## GAINING A NORMAL OUTLOOK ON BLINDNESS

"I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way.'"

Consciously or unconsciously, a fighting man develops a philosophy of life to account for the things that happen to him. Many blinded veterans admit that they feel fortunate to have escaped with their lives, even though they have lost the use of their eyes. Nevertheless, the question of Why? keeps arising.

The answer to this question is bound up with the whole problem of human suffering. Fighting men know the place of suffering in human life because they have so much of it and see so much of it. Suffering is a fact that we must all face at some time or other. "Adversity has dates for us all." Some people know suffering all the time. The question "Why must we suffer?" is an age-old problem. Pain, suffering, evil, and blindness plunge many into doubt and fear. The first reaction to blindness may be to sink into an abyss of despair. Yet it is possible to arrive at a positive attitude which does justice to the situation, giving encouragement to the present, and affording hope for the future.

In time of trouble the thoughts of men turn with deepening trust to the One Source of ever-present help. A sound philosophy for a blind man must be based upon belief in God and in the immortality of the soul. He recognizes the real evils and tragedies of human existence, and yet, with religious faith, he dares to face the future with a sane optimism, determined to mitigate the evils and ameliorate the conditions of human life in all its aspects.

You have fought for freedom on the battlefields of the world. In the age-old struggle of humanity from darkness up to light, it has been the physically handicapped who have paid the price of human freedom. God has granted His children a large measure of freedom in order that, through choice and effort, they may develop in His image. To the end that these values of moral and spiritual character may be achieved, free will on man's part is necessary. But it is upon the exercise of that free will that mistakes happen and accidents occur. So far as mankind exercises free will, mistakes and accidents are inevitable; and those who suffer as a result are paying the price of freedom and of the values which flow from it.

Only when life is regarded as worth living can it be truly lived as it should be. A wise philosopher once said: "Thoughtful men have been driven to call life an enigma but few have been willing to curse it as folly or fraud; it has too much meaning, shows too much purpose for that."

It is clear that the world is not a Pullman car fitted up with all comforts and conveniences to promote an enjoyable, carefree, pleasurable journey through life. Nor is it the place for the distributing of unearned pleasures and the guaranteeing of happiness either according to merit or otherwise. But it does provide opportunities for developing in personality, capacities for growth, and the determination to conquer despite difficulties. The opportunity to make the best of things is held out, not only to the most favored, but also to the handicapped.

### A. SPIRITUAL RESERVES

The first step in making the best of things is to call upon your spiritual reserves. Many a blinded veteran has testified that, were it not for the recollection of the comforting and stimulating scriptural passages learned in childhood, he would never have been able to survive. "The Lord is with me, I shall not fear" - what a reserve of faith in that! "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" - what a reserve of hope in that! "The Lord is my fortress and shelter" what a reserve of comfort in that! Reverting to a military metaphor, it is religion which sounds the bugle for the assembly of reserves.

Service men of all faiths will agree with Rabbi Joseph Lookstein when he says: "Religion does even more. It provides the reserves. It is the granary in which is stored up the sustaining spiritual nourishment for men to use when there is hunger in the land. It is the bottomless well from which thirsty humanity can drink. Within its sanctuaries there is faith in the ultimate destiny of the world. At its holy shrines there burns the inextinguishable flame of hope. Out of its sacred literature come endless messages of guidance and inspiration."

From the religious standpoint, suffering may contribute to the eternal salvation of the soul. As Father Francis Spirago said long ago: "The courage of a soldier displays itself not in peace but in war. There is no good work that does not meet with obstacles, no virtue that does not have to fight and struggle. Toil strengthens the body, suffering strengthens the soul. As the gold leaf is spread out by the blows of the hammer, so our love of God is extended by suffering. Suffering also makes us humble, deepens the earnestness of our prayers, and increases our gratitude to God; for the loss of health and of other gifts of God makes us value what we have lost. The courageous man does not wait for suffering but goes boldly forth to meet it. The perfect do not ask God that they be free from suffering; they value it as highly as men of the world value riches and gold and precious stones."

## B. PATRIOTISM

Perhaps your second inspiration in adapting yourself to the circumstances will come from your sense of patriotism. It will tell you that the handicap was incurred in the discharge of your patriotic duty. You may accordingly rely on it that a grateful nation is willing and eager to show its appreciation.

## C. WHAT OTHER BLIND PEOPLE HAVE DONE

In the third place, there is very solid comfort to be derived from the way in which other blind people have faced their handicap. Their cheerful and normal outlook augurs well for the attainment of the same spirit in your case. Others have done it; so can you. Visit some school for the blind and observe the happiness of its residents. Go to some workshop for the blind and note the contented labor of those who are by choice self-supporting. Find out about the many varieties of industrial positions capably filled by the blind side by side with sighted employees. Consider the large number of blind persons who have become successful in professional and commercial life. All have found happiness through victory over a disability.

There is real encouragement in the pages of Mr. Robinson Pierce's book "It Was Not My Own Idea." Or you can imbibe optimism from Mr. Joseph F. Clunk's "Open Letter to My Newly Blinded Friend in the Armed Forces." These are but two of many personal works on problems of adjustment of the blind.

After reading of such examples of courage, you may care to keep a diary of your own experiences and in time publish them for the benefit of others.

## D. CHARACTER

Another factor in your favor is the moral fiber of American men. The principles which you exemplify as an American mean that you will ask to return to the simple and sincere home life typical of our nation. You cherish high ideals of character exemplified by your conduct in daily living and in service to others. Such ideals are vibrant with faith and you must cling to them as before. When you get home, you will remember that you are a man of principle and you will insist on living as one.

## E. POTENTIALITIES

The consciousness of your present assets will enable you to decide what you intend to do. As a combatant you could give and take; as a civilian you still can. In the enjoyment of the other senses you can, for example, converse with your loved ones, listen to music, take pleasure in



food, and make good use of your hands. Your mental powers are intact and nobody can ever take away from you that which already you know. If you wish to continue your pursuit of knowledge, there is the radio, the Talking Book, and Braille as aids. In dealing with the sighted, your past stock of visual images will aid you when references are made to such matters as color or beauty, and consequently it will do away with much embarrassment as well.

An analysis of your own potentialities will aid in constructive planning through a positive attitude toward your disability. You will find that difficulties become an inconvenience rather than a handicap, that new interests will develop, and that a seeming defect can be turned into an asset. You will learn to do the same things by means of a new technique, but no apology will be needed.

## F. INFLUENCE ON OTHERS

Your blindness will be like a developing agent in bringing out the best in others.

The good will of the public is ready and waiting to be drawn on by you. One of the finest things about human nature is an instantaneous response of sympathy for misfortunes of any kind. Humanitarian instincts make people want to help others directly if they can, or indirectly at any rate. Blindness is one of the handicaps where they wish to give direct help, perhaps because it is within their power to imagine to some extent what is involved by blindness, as opposed to the loss of taste or hearing.

Sympathy, then, will be the first emotion that you will arouse in others. Respect and personal esteem will follow.

## G. AMBITION

The urge to succeed will be a potent force in shaping your attitude. The most successful blind people are those so interested in their respective fields (politics, science, radio, philosophy) that the sighted person thinks of his accomplishments rather than of his handicap. Your main task is therefore to find something (if you have not already done so) to absorb your interest and stimulate you to activity; something that will enable you to maintain contact with old friends and to make new ones. If your interests are wide and your personality is pleasing, you will be a welcome member of any group and inspire loyalty and affection. Occasionally you will be undecided as to your ambition, especially if blindness comes when you are young and you have consequently not yet formed your tastes. Eventually you will settle on something suited to your own peculiar needs in a changed world. In the final analysis, alertness and the desire for independence will help you most when you make the multitude of readjustments required by your special condition.

## H. SOCIAL AGENCIES

Another element that should count with you in establishing your viewpoint involves very practical matters. When you were a fighting man you experienced a great exhilaration through the knowledge that the other men of your outfit were backing you up. In your present crisis you have every reason to count on the support of new friends, who will be found in the social agencies handling services available to you as a veteran and as a civilian. Familiarize yourself with such resources in your community, in your state, and in your country as a whole. A partial list is appended on pages 37-40 of chapter V for your convenience.

## I. "DON'TS;"

In contrast to the previous suggestions as to things to do, there are some suggestions as to what to avoid. One is that you should not get into a frame of mind where you spend your time feeling sorry for yourself. The other is that you should recognize your limitations.

The second will be by far the harder to follow, and you will have to muster all your courage to face the fact that certain things will be denied you. Decide for yourself just what those things are in your case. The contented blind man is the one who frankly admits that he is a blind man and cannot do the impossible.



# CHAPTER 1.- PRACTICAL DAILY LIVING

## A. MEETING PEOPLE

### 1. Shaking Hands

In meeting friends and in making acquaintances, you should cultivate poise, so that you may conduct yourself with ease and naturalness of manner. Perhaps, in common with other blinded veterans, you have wondered what to do about shaking hands.

The custom of shaking hands seems to be on the wane, particularly in meeting ladies. If, therefore, you are being presented to a lady, just bow or nod and say "How do you do." If it is a man to whom you are being introduced, shaking hands is optional. If you have been in the habit of shaking hands with men, be natural and do so now. Extend your hand in greeting, even if the gesture should be overlooked or awkwardly received. It will be much less embarrassing to withdraw your hand unobtrusively than to have someone reach over and take hold of it (as is frequently the case) because he attributes your apparent lack of initiative to your sightlessness, which should in no way be held responsible. In either case, try to avoid stilted remarks. It is safer to adhere to the conventional "I am happy to know you." If you persevere in doing the normal thing despite lack of vision, people will come to treat you as they treat others.

### 2. Recognizing People

One of the failings of sighted people in dealing with the blind person is that they often ask him to guess who is speaking instead of identifying themselves. If you meet someone whom you ought to recognize but whom you fail to place immediately, confess your predicament frankly and try not to let it arouse feelings of sensitiveness within you. Any such sensitiveness, which is really your greatest handicap, can be cured by taking stock of your inner resources, the forces and materials at your disposal. You have intelligence, imagination, willpower, and a capacity for practice. With all these you should be able to rise above failure to recognize a familiar friend because you cannot see him, and because you have not yet developed voice-consciousness. The latter will come in time.

### 3. Putting Sighted Persons at Ease

One of the most important factors in achieving normal relationships is that of putting sighted persons at ease. It is difficult to convince some people that blindness does not alter personality; it is therefore your obligation to prove by your own example that no such change occurs.

When in the company of others you may find yourself referred to in the third person and not addressed directly, as when someone asks "Does he take sugar in his coffee?" There is no need to become offended, however. Pick up the conversation on your own account and answer any question which may have been directed to another concerning you by speaking for yourself. For example, you might reply to the above query by saying "One spoonful, please."

Keep well informed so that you may discuss timely topics. Thus you will dispel the apparent fear that some people have of addressing a blind person directly.

When traveling in a crowded conveyance, you will attract much less attention by accepting a seat which is offered than by refusing it. Refusal may make a kindly disposed fellow-traveler very uncomfortable, causing him to feel that he has injured your pride. However, if you prefer to remain standing, be very courteous in your refusal.

Make it your aim to remove all barriers which might hinder the free and unembarrassed actions of those about you. When assistance of any kind is offered you, be gracious in accepting or declining it, for sighted people are often given a very erroneous impression of a blind person because of rebuffs received when offering to lend a helping hand. You will meet with crudities in this connection, to be sure; but remember that it is the mark of a gentleman to be patient and understanding. Although you may be perfectly capable of performing an act unaided, do not rudely spurn a proffered service; instead, graciously demonstrate your ability to do things for yourself.

## B. CROSSING THE STREET

Suggestions for traveling alone are given in another chapter, with detailed instructions for crossing the street. Here, therefore, just a few generalities will be noted.

Where traffic is heavy and moving rapidly, it is always best if alone to pause long enough at a crossing to indicate that you would welcome assistance. Do not reject the kindly offer of a sighted pedestrian to accompany you to the opposite side of the street. A surly attitude on your part might cause the person offering you his help to refrain from helping others in the future. Sighted people often encounter this sort of reaction on the part of the blind and, through it, are given a very wrong impression. If you have a guide-dog it is necessary for you to have thorough confidence in the animal's ability to get you safely across the street, and you should follow the instructions received during your training period. But if, even under such conditions, help is given, handle the situation with consideration for your would-be benefactor.

## C. CARD PLAYING

Ability to play a good game of cards will do much toward establishing social contacts. You will use an ordinary deck that has been marked with Braille characters to indicate the suit and the value of each card. If you are unable to procure the specially prepared variety, do your own marking by placing the symbols on opposite corners of each card with the dots on the face-side.

Here is another opportunity to place sighted people at ease. Ask as few concessions as possible, and you will find that the other players will think nothing of your inability to see the cards. Persistent practice will develop facility in handling the cards and overcome any tendency to retard the game. Though the rule of the game may be for players not to pick up the cards until the entire hand has been dealt, there is no reason why you should not be permitted to begin arranging your cards during the process of dealing so that you may be ready to start the game as soon as the others do and thus not delay them unnecessarily. Arrange your cards in logical order, holding the suits between the fingers of the left hand, preferably under the table, thus preventing the possibility of unwittingly displaying your hand to the sighted players. Such players have no objection whatever to calling out the cards being played, so that you may follow the game as closely as they do themselves, but it is necessary for you to concentrate carefully in order to keep the game as a whole in mind. This may mean refraining from undue conversation, even though others encourage you to chat with them; but it is worth it, for keenness in playing will lead to your being sought after as a valued member of a card group.

## D. GETTING ATTENTION AND SERVICE IN STORES AND RESTAURANTS

There are some situations which you may wish to avoid; but, where necessity demands it, there is no good reason for evading the issue, especially if you desire thorough independence of action. Among these is the problem of getting attention and service in stores and restaurants.

On entering a store, walk cautiously in the direction where you have detected the sound of voices; when you have reached the counter you will soon discover the location of one of the clerks. You are likely to receive prompt attention; but, if this is not the case, ask to be served in your proper turn. Avoid demanding help, as other purchasers may be ahead of you; rather ask in a friendly way for service. Do not become annoyed or self-conscious if you find yourself mistaken for one asking alms, for it is after all far better to meet such a situation with dignity, quietly announcing that you have come to make a purchase, then to rush from the store in a rage, vowing never to return. If your mission requires a visit to a department store, it is advisable to go accompanied by a sighted companion.

Getting service in restaurants presents a variety of circumstances. In relatively simple situations, as in frequenting the counter of a quick-lunch restaurant, if you enter alone and move slowly, it will be apparent that you are blind. After you have gone in a number of times you will find that you can enter and leave without assistance.



In going unaccompanied to a restaurant providing nothing but table-service, you should be prepared for two obstacles at the very entrance. One is the revolving door, and the other is the partition or shield of glass or wood erected to screen patrons from drafts. When dining out formally, therefore, you had better advance only a few steps after entering and then proceed exactly as the sighted are advised to by the best authorities on etiquette. There may be an attendant to check your hat and coat. There will certainly be a hostess or a waiter, and at any rate someone will conduct you to a table. Ascertain whether or not your guide is a waiter (or waitress); if the guide is not, ask for the services of a waiter. Explain to the waiter that you would like to have the menu read to you and, if your order includes food which requires cutting and you are hesitant about using a knife, have no qualms about requesting that such service be rendered. This and other assistance throughout the meal may be obtained very readily, and can be recognized by means of a gratuity a little in excess of the ordinary amount. Under such circumstances you may feel free to ask to be conducted to the door on the way out, stopping at the proper place en route to pay for the meal if there is a cashier.

The presence of a companion would of course make the above suggestions unnecessary. Let us assume that you have invited a sighted girl to have luncheon or dinner with you. She can help you in many unobtrusive ways without offending your sense of independence. Let her read you the bill of fare, but you be the one to give the orders to the waiter and to pay the check. She can help you by telling you where the food is on the plate by the "clock-method" (the meat at 6 o'clock, the relish at 9, the vegetable at 3, and so forth. Or again, by some conversational remark, she can indicate where the various dishes are on the table.

You might like to know that some blind men and women have given thought to the actual types of food which are easy to consume in public, involving no complications. In the matter of sandwiches they choose liverwurst or hamburger as opposed to chicken-salad. For vegetables they turn to mashed potatoes or squash instead of peas or broccoli. They order meatballs or scallops, which as generally served are just right for individual bites, instead of chops or fish containing bones. Their favorite desserts are ice-cream and cup-cakes instead of pie and fruit containing pits.

Habits and skills in eating are discussed elsewhere in greater detail.

#### E. HOW THE PARTIALLY BLIND SHOULD DEAL WITH EMPLOYER OR FRIENDS UNAWARE OF HIS HANDICAP

If your vision has been impaired merely to a degree where you are considered partially blind, you will be interested in the following paragraphs included for just such cases as yours.

As we consider the matter of getting along with people in the sighted world, one of the first obstacles to be overcome is sensitiveness. It is a greater handicap than any physical disability. Sensitiveness makes one self-depreciative, ultimately leading him to shrink from society; an attitude which is a serious mistake. Every man on earth has limitations of some kind, and to free the mind of handicap-consciousness is the first step in the right direction. It is necessary that we rid ourselves of everything, which in the slightest degree, retards our progress.

People classified as having useful vision or being partially blind often suffer more from the standpoint of sensitiveness than do those who are totally blind. Their false pride makes them resort to every conceivable means of disguising their handicap. This is a most unwise procedure, for it is impossible to conceal certain difficulties occasioned by lack of normal vision. When an individual thinks that he is deceiving others, though in reality he alone is the one being deceived, embarrassing and confusing situations arise. There are those who go to the extreme of pretending to see more than they really can see, even among their closet friends, never realizing that they are making themselves objects of greater pity than they would if they had the courage to be perfectly frank about their handicap.

The best advice that can be given to one who finds himself hampered more by sensitiveness than by imperfect vision is to recognize this fact honestly, and therefore to conquer sensitiveness. If it is the root of your difficulty, do not consider it a calamity, for sensitiveness can be a positive advantage if properly disciplined. All superior people, masters in their way, have fine sensitive natures. If being sensitive has made you timid in company, make yourself go into society, no matter how it hurts. Inure yourself to the "pain," and you will get over it.

If people with whom you are less intimately associated do not seem to recognize that you have impaired vision, it is far better to acquaint them with the fact when at all necessary than to risk future embarrassment. This is especially advisable in dealing with an employer, for an attempt at deception may cost you your position when the handicap is discovered, not so much because of the handicap itself as because you have practised the deception. It is only fair that he should be supplied with an ophthalmologist's record of the degree of your vision.

How much simpler it is not to be repressed concerning a condition over which you have no control, and which should in no way create in you a sense of inferiority! There is much to be gained by a frank disclosure of your limitation. As a result of obtaining this information, your employer is likely to be more understanding; his assignments will be governed by your ability to carry them out independently; or he will afford you the assistance which you may require in certain phases of the work.

The conquest of sensitiveness is, then, the keynote to success in getting along with people in the sighted world. Once achieved, it will bring you a sense of pride and victory.



# CHAPTER II - PERSONAL HABITS

## A. THE MECHANICS OF EATING

The matter of feeding oneself has long been of concern to the blind. The various factors which enter into the mechanics of eating are in some instances so simple that they have been overlooked in many lists of suggestions. Let us take the good and bad features item by item.

In your own case, the tradition of the Navy demands that things be done with polish.

By extension, your early experience plus this training will have left you with splendid "conditioned reflexes" as to reaching for food and cutlery. That is, you are starting with a good "muscle-memory" or sense of reach. Your muscles know just how to flex to pick up a glass of water, and your arm knows how far to reach for a cup of coffee at your right.

Posture itself is exceedingly important. You will remember having been taught at home to sit up straight, to keep your arms off the table, and to raise the food to your mouth instead of lowering your mouth to the food. Try to preserve that good posture and technique.

What is perhaps the most essential factor in cutting food and conveying it to the mouth is the presence of mechanical ability.

The knowledge of how a table is set is part of the key to success. Cutlery is usually placed in the order in which it is to be used, with spoons and knife on your right, and forks on your left. The glass or goblet for water is on your right, just beyond the tip of your knife. The plate for bread and butter is on your left, at the prongs of your fork. Salad (if served with the main course) or a vegetable (such as stewed tomatoes) in a separate dish is placed in the middle. If your place is set this way consistently, you will never reach for a piece of bread and knock over a glass of water. Memory will help you greatly on this occasion, as on so many others.

It is generally agreed that a small piece of bread is efficient as a "pusher" or "slide-rule." With it you can prevent food from slipping off or around the plate, and also tell when your plate is empty.

Just as habits carried over from earlier days will help you now, so the formation of one particular new habit will prove worth the effort. At home ask to be given the same seat at the table, so that you may orient yourself efficiently. Then you will know where you are seated in relation to the sugar and creamer, pepper and salt, pitcher of water, and so forth.

When it comes to the actual process of cutting food and using the fork to convey it to the mouth, many people have recommended the method used in England and on the continent of Europe. There the knife is held in the right hand and the fork in the left hand, but the fork is not transferred to the right hand when raising food to the mouth. This system works well for those who have long been familiar with it, for those who are left-handed, and for those who are ambidextrous, but it is not always an easy one for right-handed people to adopt.

The types of food which the blind have reported as difficult to eat are soup (both thick and thin), plain lettuce-salad (uncut), thick meat (especially when containing bones), fish in which small bones are present, chicken, lobster, baked potatoes, pie, and fruit with pits in it.

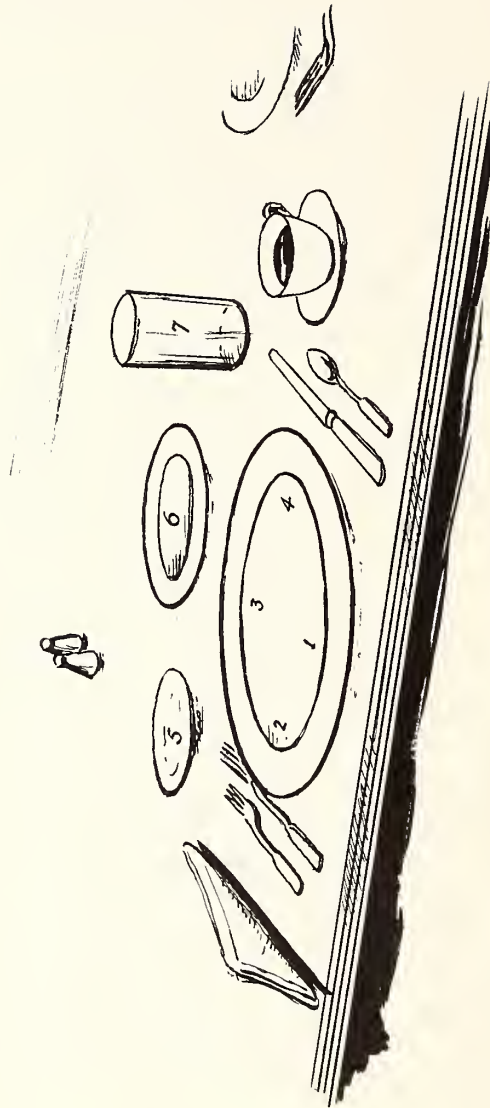
Since the problem of taking soup neatly is not a new one, you might benefit from the advice given by other blind people. It has been found by experience that the spoon should be tilted over the bowl a little each time before being raised to the mouth, thanks to which maneuver the spoon could not be overfull and no soup need be spilled.

When a leaf of lettuce lies more or less flat on a plate, or when a segment of a head of lettuce is served, the blind person is confronted with a real problem. The presence of French dressing or Russian dressing or mayonnaise on top only makes the salad more slippery. If a salad-fork is available the lettuce can sometimes be cut as if it were a piece of pie without too much difficulty. If only the regular fork is at hand, the cutting is much harder. It is probably safest to ask that the lettuce be thoroughly shredded for you. If a sighted person fails to cut the lettuce all the way through, you may intend to pick up a single piece but find that you have pieces strung together.

In the cutting of meat or fish containing no bones, you might care to adopt the technique taught in one of our hospitals for blinded veterans. It is patterned after the continental mode of retaining the fork in the left hand and is divided into seven steps;

1. The veteran moves the knife and fork lightly over the piece and around its edges, lining the piece up in such a way that its length is sidewise to him.

- |             |                                   |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Meat     | 4. Vegetables, peas, carrots etc. |
| 2. Relish   | 5. Bread and Butter plate         |
| 3. Potatoes | 6. Salad Plate                    |
|             | 7. Water Goblet                   |



2. With the prongs of the fork pointed down, he moves the fork to the extreme left edge of the piece.

3. He places the back of the knife flat against the tines of the fork and then, by turning the knife upright, has the cutting edge about 1/2 inch to the right, exactly in position for the correct width of the strip to be cut.

4. While holding the piece steady with the knife, he moves the fork to the right until it touches the knife.

5. He cuts through until he hears the knife strike the plate, and continues cutting if the strip has not been severed at all points.

6. He pulls the cut piece away and eats it without further ado (leaving the fork in the left hand), unless it is too long. If the piece is too long he simply bisects the long strip already impaled on the fork, eating first the piece on the fork. By keeping the knife in place he easily finds the other half of the strip.

7. He repeats the process until all the meat or fish has been cut and eaten, of course helping himself to vegetables in between.

When one large bone is present in a piece of meat or fish, you can locate it by a light tap with the knife. The bone may be removed by cutting around it and depositing it upon the edge of your plate. Then cut up the remainder of the chop, steak, or slice of fish as just out-lined.

The presence of many small bones in fish is vexing to anyone. The only course seems to be the use of the fork (in the right hand) to eliminate the bones and push them to one side, and the use of a piece of bread or roll (in the left hand) to prevent slipping. After that you can usually detach a small piece of fish with the fork alone, continuing in this manner until it is gone.

If fried chicken is served on an informal occasion (a picnic, for example), it is of course all right to pick it up in your hands. But, in eating formally, etiquette demands that the knife and fork be used. Here you would be wise to ask for the drumstick (dark meat) or breast (white meat), in order to have a piece containing few if any bones.

Boiled or broiled lobster should be split in two and at least partly cracked before being brought to the table. If this has been done, the small fork accompanying it should enable you to have access to most of the meat.

In the case of a baked potato the tough skin constitutes the chief obstacle. One way to cut through it without fatigue or accidents is to use a knife served especially with steak or chops.

The two kinds of pie which render cutting and eating difficult are pie that is not flaky and pie that contains a large amount of juice. It is therefore better to ask someone else to cut the non flaky variety, and to avoid ordering the "runny" variety.

Preserved fruit containing pits (cherries, for instance) is the last "pest" on the list. One mode of attacking the problem is to eat the juice first and then to use a teaspoon to remove the pit or stone before turning to the fruit proper.

If for any reason you are not wearing a vest and coat while eating, watch that your tie does not get into your food and even into your mouth; the tie could be tucked in the shirt, or a tie-clasp could be worn.

Your fork can be used inconspicuously to move food toward the center of your plate, making eating easier and avoiding pushing anything off the plate.

You can also feel beyond your plate in an unobstrusive way to see if anything would be upset by moving your plate back, as in making way for dessert.

Blind people who are meticulous about their table manners feel gently around the table to make sure that things are in place: knife and spoons at right; glass of water or milk at tip of knife; forks at left; plate for bread and butter at tip of fork; napkin at left of fork; cup of coffee or cocoa or tea at right of spoons; salad just beyond plate if room, or if not at left of fork. They prefer leaving the last bits of food to using the fingers to pile them on the fork. When they use a piece of bread to guide food onto the fork they do so inconspicuously. They do not hesitate to ask for extra help in unfamiliar surroundings where their handicap may not be known or where their difficulty with one particular dish may not be sensed; such help is vital when a peach is served whole as dessert, and so forth.

## B. BLINDISMS

This term has been coined to denote the awkward gestures or traits of character which seem to set the blind apart from other handicapped people. These movements or characteristics are



more apt to be found, if found at all, in those who have long been blind instead of those who become blind in adult life.

In your case they are therefore mentioned as something to avoid, not as something to correct. You have had the advantage of acquiring natural gestures by copying those of your family as you were growing up, and you should continue using them. It may be well to note that these mannerisms affect the hands and head chiefly, and the feet occasionally. For example, the hands are allowed to fidget (being rubbed together, clasped and unclasped incessantly, passed over objects not under special examination), while the head is swayed back and forth or dropped on the chest. The commonest fault of locomotion is shuffling the feet or its opposite, lifting the feet too high at each step; a less usual blindness here is a bouncing walk, as if there were springs in the shoes. At times the whole body is made to sway back and forth. All such motions, you will agree, make their victim conspicuous and call attention to a handicap that might otherwise go unnoticed in public.

The traits of character are of course a question of cause and effect. A person who does not see is more apt to say to a person entering a room, "Who is it?" Again, a blind person seems to expect a sighted person to have eyes in the back of his head or to see around corners. Or one who has led a fairly cloistered life and is therefore unfamiliar with certain social usages is prone to make frequent use of surnames in public (sometimes to the embarrassment of the sighted, who do not like their names shouted out in public), or to drop in on people without finding out first if it is convenient. Personalities seem to enter more largely into the life of the congenitally blind, and when a sighted person makes an impersonal quotation ("Someone was telling me...") he is almost sure to be asked "Who was it?"

We all want to live on good terms with our fellow-creatures, and to do so we must often be told what offends.



# CHAPTER III - PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF DAILY LIVING

## A. TRAVELING ALONE

There are two schools of thought as to the use of a cane, a guide-dog, and dark glasses. Some blind people consider one or all indispensable, while others reject all three because they are rendered conspicuous by them. You will have to decide for yourself what course to pursue. Assuming that you wish to keep an open mind on the subject, here are some arguments of the sightless who travel alone and like it.

Every ability used by the recently blinded in finding their way alone was always part of their physical makeup prior to the loss of sight. For example, muscle-calculations or muscle-judgments (employed in driving a car, in dancing gracefully, in walking carefully over an icy surface), which were never used consciously in finding the way, are used by the newly blinded in walking straight without the aid of a particular guide or "beacon." Thus muscle-memory, utilized by the seeing in such skills as operating the typewriter or playing the piano without recourse to the eyes in locating the keys, is turned to good account by the non-sighted in order to learn right and left turns and approximate distances in places frequently traversed by them. The sense of hearing, which tells seeing persons where to look, often tells the sightless where to go or where not to go. The sense of smell indicates to the latter the direction of a grocery store, a drug store, or a shoe store. The sensitive soles of the feet enable the blind to notice and remember rough or smooth spots in the pavement, or a slight rise or drop; such things serve as landmarks or clues in helping them to get their bearings.

So far as mental helps are concerned, they will vary with the place of residence. Two examples will suffice to illustrate travel in a small community and travel in a metropolis. One kind is obtaining from others a verbal description of the neighborhood, with emphasis on landmarks. Another is counting the number of stops after a train leaves a tunnel, or the number of stops after the door has opened on a certain side.

Learning how to find your way alone is not going to be a superhuman task. You are simply going to extend the functions of the abilities which you have been using all the time for various purposes, so that they will now act as powers or tools of orientation. When functioning properly and jointly, these abilities combine to form a sum total known as "a good sense of direction." Development of the sense of direction begins with the first systematic attempt to find your way around without the use of the eyes. Persistent, individual effort is the key to the possession of a good sense of direction; and anyone who says "I can't" is in a sense quite right. You can't - unless you try.

Persons who have been blind for years avoid obstacles with surprising ease. Many persons who do not see find that they are able to notice obstacles (such as a wall, a tree, a pole, or a parked automobile when the motor is not running) as "something looming up in space." That is, things seem to be "sensed" a certain distance away from the face, from very close to about 50 feet away, according to the size and nature of the object and other conditions. This ability is best explained as the rapid, sometimes subconscious, interpretation of combinations of sensations, which serve as cues warning of possible danger. Among these cues which give warning of the presence of obstacles are echoes, changes in temperature, odors, currents of air, and changes in atmospheric pressure. The chief organ for the reception of these sensations is the ear; there are also tiny nerve endings in the face which are sensitive to changes in temperature and air pressure. Combinations of these sensations may cause the contraction of muscles and changes in muscle-tone and muscular reactions. This sensitivity of the face and muscles to changes in the surroundings is sometimes spoken of as the "facial sense" or the "muscle-sense." In medical literature the accepted terms are orientation in space or perception of space.

A warning is necessary here. Never let anyone mislead you into thinking that you have "facial vision." It is obviously absurd to suppose that you can see anything with your face. The sensitivity of the face and muscles to stimuli caused by obstacles comes only after considerable experience and training. And even then you will not notice these sensations unless you are giving them your undivided attention. If you are walking down the street thinking about something else, you cannot expect your "facial sense," as it has been called, to steer you around a lamp-post, a projecting doorstep or curbstone, or a firehydrant. This so-called "obstacle-sense" is seldom able to locate an object precisely, but it still serves the useful purpose of warning you to slow your pace and look about you, with your cane. Some blind persons have training their hearing

so that they can tell by clapping the hands or snapping the fingers, whether there is an object in the immediate vicinity. The changing echo of footfalls may also be noticed in the presence of walls or buildings which are being approached.

Since there is no better whetstone for any ability than putting it to work, you will find that the quickest way to awaken your awareness in sensing the presence of obstacles will be to try to move about by yourself as much as possible. In doing this, always walk with good, relaxed posture. At the same time you will have to be alert to anything that may help or hinder you, much as a sighted person reclines in an easy chair but does not miss anything that is going on around him. As you come to a large object (a wall, for instance), try to notice whether there is any difference in the feeling about your face when you stand some distance from it (10 or 15 feet) and when you stand close to it. Practise distinguishing sounds in the same way. It is quite likely that you will notice no difference at first, but the advantages of an awakened awareness to obstacles through the use of all your senses are too rich a prize to be given up because of a number of seemingly unsuccessful attempts.

You will succeed more quickly in awakening the sense if you make a conscious effort to do so. Have someone help you in selecting a safe, open, and quiet place outdoors with a wall or high fence nearby, where you may walk to and fro at leisure, trying to "sense" the wall or fence as you approach it. Do not discard the cane when doing this. Your first experience of being aware of "something" looming up out in space may be so vague that you will think that you have just imagined the sensing of something near at hand. As the experience recurs however, you will be convinced that it is nothing imagined but something quite real and meaningful. You will learn through practice how to enjoy the advantages of this power of orientation.

Much value attaches to distinct sounds as clues in ascertaining directions, identifying places, and avoiding danger. If you are walking along looking for a restaurant, the clink of glasses and dishes and the smell of food will direct you to it. The grinding noise of a power drill plus the pounding of hammers and the noise of other tools will warn you to slow down and use your cane cautiously, as you are approaching construction work of some kind, which usually means obstacles on the sidewalk to be sidestepped. You can often use the sound of people's footfalls to find your way into or out of trains and buses. The clinking or dropping of coins will guide you to the box or slot for coins. When you make use of the same means of conveyance in reaching a customary destination, your ear will be quick to pick up clues through which you will be able to tell that you have arrived, or are about to arrive, at the stop that you want. Some examples of such clues would be the shrill scraping of wheels on the tracks just before your station, or the bumping noise of wheels going over a switch, or a relatively less noisy spot on the track. You will be able to pick out other landmarks as well, such as a sharp curve or a slight ascent or descent. A "sense of distance" will also help to give you a practical perspective of frequently traveled route. When you are going to a new destination, or when you are not able to find any reliable clue, the driver or conductor is always glad, at your request, to let you off at your stop. This seems the right place to note that, when boarding a vehicle, it is safest to ascertain from the driver or conductor just what bus or train you have taken (No. 4 bus; Forest Park train); passengers often give unreliable information.

It is from the sum-total of information which you gather through the various tools used for orientation that you acquire a practical perspective of each place. Let us say, for example, that you are coming out of the house into which you have just moved. You turn to the left and walk to the corner. As you approach the curb, something looms up at your left. This information is sufficient to prevent a bump, but not to identify the object. You stop at the curb because your ear tells you that the traffic is not in your favor. Suddenly you hear a few soft clicks coming out of the object at your left, and immediately the flow of traffic shifts in your favor. "Ah," you conclude, "this object is the traffic-light tower." You may discover that your house is the third one with a projecting doorstep on the block (the buildings being at your right), or one found a few steps after you pass a post on your left. Finding your way is a process of "putting two and two together" and it does require effort and concentration, but the personal freedom which they buy is cheap at the price.

Since the powers of orientation are constantly assuming the burden of carrying out the functions which the eyes were intended to perform, sightless persons use up considerably more energy in the course of a day's work than seeing persons do. Furthermore, the efficiency of the senses and muscles is increased or reduced as the health of the individual is good or poor. No sightless man ever feels that the way to compensate for this extra consumption of energy is to work less than his sighted friends do, for those who do not see know that what they wish above all



else is to live normally and independently. In the scrupulous observance of the rules of physical exercise and sports lies the solution to the problem of preserving the keenness of the senses, the efficiency of the muscles, and the mental alertness necessary for traveling safely, gracefully, and at a practical speed. Walking outdoors for the sake of exercise, swimming, and joining your friends in games of sport whenever possible should be a vital part of your life. Get your full quota of rest and sleep, and start the day right with a good wholesome breakfast. Your physical nature is ever striving to "pool" all its resources in order to reduce to a minimum the effects of loss of sight; therefore let your mind be as sensible as your body and do not abuse it, because you cannot afford to diminish any of its powers. If your hearing is defective, you should try to have this condition remedied at once by proper medical care, as the importance of hearing has already been made evident.

## 1. Use of a Cane

The best way for a newly blind person to locate obstacles is by the use of a cane.

The use of white canes is restricted by law to the blind for their benefit and protection in some sections of the country. There are now canes made of a plastic as well as of wood or metal. Learn to hold the cane, whatever its material, with either hand.

The first step in learning how to travel alone with the aid of a cane consists in learning how to handle the cane. Let the arm managing the cane hang close to the side, straight down from the shoulder to the elbow. Extend the forearm forward from the elbow. Keep the wrist oblique, with the thumb-side uppermost. In order to hold the cane, close the hand firmly around the handle, but with no tenseness or tight grip. Thus the part of the handle joining the shaft of the cane faces forward; the upper part of the handle is between the thumb and the first finger; the under part of the handle (near the point where handle and shaft meet) rests on the thumb-side of the first finger on or near the second joint; the second finger closes under the handle.

When the cane is grasped in this manner it slants most naturally, the tip being farthest forward and ready to "spot" danger ahead in time to avoid it. The tip is then also in a position to make contact with the ground easily by a slight lowering of the forearm whenever necessary. You may find it necessary to lower your arm and feel your way in any of the following circumstances:

1. When you have to move but have not yet gotten your bearings.
2. When you are walking on an elevated structure from which you might fall.
3. When you approach a flight of stairs to be descended.
4. When you want to create an echo to help you estimate the distance to some object.

In addition, this method of holding the cane affords maximum protection to the hand, leaving no fingers sticking out to be scraped or to be compressed by the door of a car or train.

The cane will help you to achieve the art of walking in a straight line, a very valuable asset in traveling alone. To develop this ability practise walking, cane in hand, alongside the wall of a large room or long corridor from one corner to another. As you walk, let no part of your body or clothing touch the wall; take natural and free strides, for you will never achieve the art of walking straight unless your steps are even and steady. Every few places tap the wall lightly with the tip of your cane, to make sure that you are not veering away from the wall. It will be well if at first there are no obstacles to obstruct your way, since the object of this exercise is to learn to walk straight. The same result might be achieved outdoors along the edge of a straight section of pavement. Do not always walk with the wall on the same side with reference to yourself; let the wall be at your right in some instances and at your left in others. Whether the wall is on your right or left, you may hold the cane in either hand. A simple turn of the wrist will cause the tip of the cane to touch the wall if you have not swerved from it, and thus you can ascertain whether or not you are moving in a straight line. This operation will be the same walking anywhere.

Whenever you must move without being perfectly certain of your bearings, keep turning the wrist alternately and strike the ground with the cane between each turn of the wrist. In this way you will ascertain what is ahead of each foot as you walk.

As you walk with your usual strides, keep your free hand hanging relaxed at your side. When you think that you are coming close to an obstacle in front of you, do not yield to the temptation to grope. If you hold your cane as has been suggested, you will be able to use it most effectively to detect any obstacle in front or on either side provided your cane is the proper length.





Determine the proper length for a man of your height by having someone hold a cane upright against your side when you stand with the arm hanging down at the side. If the crook of the cane comes just above your elbow, this cane is the right length for you. The tip of a cane this long will be 8 inches in front of whichever foot is forward when the cane is held as recommended.

Furthermore, a cane should be sturdy enough to support your weight in case that you must lean on it to preserve your balance. For instance, a bus, street car, or train that you have just boarded may start suddenly before you have had a chance to find a seat or reach for a strap.

If you wish to ascertain the location of something more than 8 inches away from your foot (perhaps the edge of a curb), you may let your elbow leave its position at your side and thus increase the reach of your cane. In the presence of danger, stand completely still until your cane has given you the necessary information. Do not bend your body forward under any circumstances. The better your posture, the less likely you are to lose your balance, and the better your muscles and senses will serve you.

Develop the knack of coming to a complete stop the moment that your cane comes into contact with an obstacle. At first you may find it difficult to stop short, but keep practising until detection of obstacles and stopping instantly have become an automatic habit. You will find this art better than accident insurance.

Often, when making your way in unfamiliar parts (railway stations, sidewalks, office buildings), you will have to sidestep such obstacles as coin-operated machines along walls (for vending food or telling weight), baby-carriages on walks, and articles of furniture in offices. Prepare yourself for manoeuvres to avoid them by making your way from one end to the other of a large room where the furniture has been arranged to form a well defined path, but where some objects (including those projecting from walls) must be sidestepped. As you begin to make your way, let someone stand at the opposite end of the path and occasionally produce the sound of jingling coins, ring a bell, or operate a machine. Such sounds will resemble as nearly as possible the ones which will serve you as clues to direction when you begin traveling alone. The object of this exercise, as of all the other exercises here recommended, is to rehearse actual traveling. That is why the sounds across the room should not be produced with the precision of a metronome. Sound-clues in actual traveling will seldom be so ideally made to order. Nor should the furniture in the room be arranged to form a "maze". In real travel "mazes" are not often encountered. When they are met with, the only alternative is to "sound" your way through with your cane.

In congested sections where the din of traffic does not permit you to tell when a car is going to turn the corner, it is extremely dangerous to cross the street unassisted. Avoid the risk of suffering a new injury that may turn into an additional handicap. Never leave the curb until you know that you have the right of way. Before leaving the curb, be sure that you are starting straight for the opposite curb, not diagonally. When your cane tells you that you have reached the other curb, slow down and step up on the curb cautiously, turning your wrist in such a way that, if you are holding the cane with your right hand, the tip will be in front of your left foot. If you are holding the cane with your left hand, the tip will be in front of your right foot.

This procedure will protect your whole body from collisions with posts, bus signs, mail boxes, and similar objects apt to be at curbs. Then move forward cautiously until, by your cane or your "facial sense" or some other clue, you know that you have reached the row of buildings or familiar landmarks. You are now ready to proceed along the block.

When you are approaching a flight of ascending stairs, slow down and with your cane estimate the distance to the first step. Then proceed to go up, striking each step with the cane until you have reached the top safely. After you have become thoroughly familiar with the staircase, you will not find it necessary to touch every step. When you approach a set of descending steps, slow down so that you can estimate the distance to the first step down. Then proceed to descend, holding the cane slightly lower than when you are making contact with level ground, so that when you reach the bottom of the stairs the cane will strike the level ground just before your foot does. Always measure the depth of a drop before stepping down. This is most important in preventing such accidents as stepping into a hole, onto the railway-tracks, and into other places equally dangerous.

In going through a revolving door, hold your cane with your right hand, and approach the door slowly with your left arm raised diagonally toward the right and bent at the elbow. In this way you will not get your fingers caught and you will protect your body, as your arm will touch the door first when you are ready to go through. As you approach the door, listen carefully for





the sound of footfalls ahead, so that you will not interfere with others ahead of you.

In your home and in places equally free from danger, learn to get along without a cane; move about freely and with confidence. This will make your sighted friends and family feel at ease when you are around them, and will help them forget that you cannot see.

With the development of science, mechanical aids for guidance of the blind may appear through the use of Radar or other technical means. Up to the present no practical mechanical aids have been produced.

## 2. Use of a Guide Dog

The points of view as to the usefulness of a dog as guide are widely divergent. For that reason it has been advised by authorities that no decision be reached until at least a year has elapsed after discharge from the hospital. That period of proving will tell you whether or not you will find it advisable to apply for the training necessary to secure a guide dog.

The following are the advantages and disadvantages of the guide dog.

The companionship of the dog is of real value to many persons, especially the newly blind who feel the need of the emotional outlet and sense of security which such companionship gives. "Your dog is one friend who will never let you down" is the way that they express it.

A second advantage is the sense of security or independence in traveling alone. The aid of the dog enables a newly blind person to step off briskly down the street, and to cross the street in traffic without having to ask assistance.

Many blind persons have to pay a sighted guide to take them to and from work, and the guide dog enables the blind to dispense with this costly service. In some cases the guide dog makes employment or earning a livelihood possible for blind persons who might not otherwise be able to work.

Numerous blind persons in all walks of life use guide dogs. The many persons in the United States who own such dogs are found in nearly every occupation from mechanical and industrial to commercial and professional positions.

The public has become accustomed to the use of guide dogs by blind persons, and this recognition affords an additional protection. The guide dog is thus a recognized part of a blind person's equipment. Such dogs are allowed to travel on most vehicles of transportation in nearly every State in the Union. In some States this right is recognized by law.

We cannot be realistic and straightforward in dealing with this subject unless we mention the disadvantages of the use of the guide dog.

Some people do not like dogs. In addition to proper food and care, dogs must have a normal amount of affection and friendly treatment. This necessary care might be regarded as a nuisance and a burden by those who feel no special affection for dogs.

Dogs are creatures of habit and their continued discipline must not be neglected. If not kept in training or if petted by strangers, dogs may embarrass their owners by improper behavior and become unreliable as guides. In this connection there is the possibility that the animal itself will incur injury or sickness while in harness and cause its owner to suffer a bad fright if not actual injury.

Congested traffic in large cities presents a problem, in meeting which some people think that guide dogs are inadequate or unnecessary. Dogs prove unnecessary where blind persons who travel to and from work daily soon master the course alone simply by repetition.

There is further danger that the use of the dog may become an emotional crutch to which the blind person clings as the baby to its rattle. The use of a dog should not be allowed to prevent the development of independence in traveling alone.

## 3. Use of Dark Glasses

If you choose to wear dark glasses, it may be for a variety of reasons. One is that the wearing of tinted lenses tells the public that any stumbling into people is not due to intoxication. Of course there are other conditions leading to staggering, such as cardiac disorders or faintness after donating blood.

The concealment of scars or other deformities by means of dark or frosted glasses has been advocated by many writers. Some people are as sensitive to red eyes as to the sight of blood,

and so if you are dealing with squeamish people you may choose to spare yourself their reactions.

In addition to the above motives your own physical comfort is to be considered. If some vision is present and the sun or any glare causes actual pain you will no doubt find relief in smoked glasses. One totally blind person whose eyes water and hurt on exposure to the wind found green plastic glasses with side-pieces (also keeping out the wind at the side) the solution to his problem.

The reaction of many blind adults is to resent the suggestion that the eyes be screened in some way. They feel that the wearing of dark glasses for any reason save the relief of pain is tantamount to branding themselves blind as surely as if they wore a printed sign. Any badge that makes them conspicuous in a crowd hurts their pride and reminds them of the sacrifice of their independence.

There is another side to it. Today many people wear mildly tinted lenses (especially in the summer), many people wear spectacles of some kind (including contact-lenses) most of the time, and there are many types of eyeglasses, some becoming to the wearer. Any stigma attached to the wearing of glasses is therefore lessened because you are only one of many.

The possibility of being cut if glasses break while on the wearer has been diminished through the development of non-shatterable and plastic materials. In what is now a post-war world there will doubtless be great improvement in this field.

There seems to be no one solution that will apply to all visually handicapped persons. Perhaps it is largely a matter of personal desire. If you are not sensitive, taking the attitude that you do not care who knows of your handicap, you will probably be happier with dark glasses to announce the nature of your handicap and bring you the extra courtesies that may prove welcome.

## B. TRAVELING WITH A SIGHTED GUIDE

Many railroads, bus-lines, and ships do not wish to be responsible for blind persons traveling alone. For this reason they have granted a concession whereby a blind person and the sighted person acting as guide may travel for one fare. Instructions for filing an application to travel in this way are given on page 38 of chapter V.

## C. ROOM ORIENTATION

### 1. Ascertaining Location of Furniture

It is always wise to be cautious when entering an unfamiliar room. On stepping across the threshold look about, in order to gather through the so-called "facial sense" as much information as possible regarding the general shape and size of the room. If you use your ears to good advantage, you will soon discover that they can bring you a surprising amount of knowledge concerning the room. If conversation is taking place, you can easily estimate the number of persons present, their relative positions in the room and whether they are seated or standing. The distance of the various voices will give you a fair idea of the size of the room. The quality of the voices (muffled or ringing) will disclose whether the room is abundantly or scantily furnished. Take note of all the sounds which can be used later as clues to assist you in moving about the room freely. Noises from the outside may indicate windows, or doors to other rooms. The ticking of a clock might give you the location of a table or shelf or mantelpiece. A radio set, when turned on, is invaluable in helping you to judge distances.

Intelligent listening can aid you greatly in familiarizing yourself with your immediate surroundings, but it does not warn you of such objects as lamps, coffee-tables, footstools, and so forth. Extreme care when first moving about is therefore wise. If you have a cane with you, use it as an aid in locating these objects, but handle it gently so as not to upset or damage anything.

### 2. The Orderly Arrangement of Personal Belongings

A blind person who does not keep his belongings in specific places will constantly find himself in trouble. You must therefore heed Benjamin Franklin's adage of "a place for everything



and everything in its place." Decide on a place in which to keep each article, and always return the article to its own particular spot. By so doing you will be able to locate any desired article immediately without disturbing other things.

Devise ways of separating articles identical save for color. For instance, have a tie-rack which is divided into several sections, so that ties to be worn with certain suits may be kept together. Use a shoe-rack and always put your shoes, in pairs, in their proper places. One way to distinguish your colored shirts from your white ones, if the texture of the material is not a sufficient clue, is to have them marked with thread, each of the various colors being indicated by a different number of "French knots." A refinement of this marking is to have Braille-symbols embroidered to indicate the actual color (bl for blue, wh for white). In either case the identification may be placed in some inconspicuous place, where it will not be seen if the coat is removed in public and where the shirt will not get mussed when the identification is sought. The inner neckband would be ideal from both viewpoints unless the dots should chafe a sensitive neck. The space between the upper buttons, under the tie when the shirt is worn, would be the second choice. If you should be so situated that no assistance from a sighted person is available, it may be safer to wear white shirts and no others, for the colored ones often fade badly in laundering.

If you launder your own socks, pin them together in pairs before washing them, and you will never be embarrassed by appearing in public with socks that are not mates. Another solution is to purchase half a dozen pairs of socks just alike, and then your worries as to matching are not so great.

### 3. How to Find Articles When Dropped

In recovering an article you have dropped, there are some things to avoid and other things to do.

When you suddenly lose hold of something, never bend forward to try to catch it before it reaches the floor. Such an attempt is nearly always futile. What is worse, it frequently results in splitting a lip on the back of a chair that you have not noticed, in bumping an eye or nose against a bedpost, or in making you the victim of some other equally exasperating accident. As an article falls, do not gasp or utter a sound, because this noise would hamper your ear in detecting the position of the object as it touches the floor. Never use your feet to try to find it.

Do listen attentively, so that the direction of the sound made by the object as it strikes the floor will fix itself clearly in your mind. Then bend down cautiously, with your hand extended, so that it will touch the floor as nearly as possible at the spot from which you heard the sound. If your hand fails to locate the article at the first try, lightly comb the area from which the sound emanated, always drawing your hand toward you when it meets the floor. This will draw the missing object toward you and not push it farther away. To do this successfully, it is important to keep both feet in the exact spot where you were standing when the article fell.

If you have dropped a coin or some object that rolls or bounces, start walking slowly, following the object by the sound, so that when it comes to a rest you will be within bending-reach of it. Then proceed as before.

If the article dropped is a handkerchief or an article which makes no noise on alighting, immediately note the position of your hands when it slipped out of your grasp, so that you may estimate the general direction in which it fell. This calculation will have to take the place of any noise; then you may proceed as already indicated.

When for some reason you are at first unaware that you have dropped an article, and when your idea of its location is consequently very vague, try using your cane as finder by moving it back and forth horizontally and around in circles along the floor. Move it gently, so that when you finally touch the article you will not again send it beyond your reach.

## D. TELLING TIME

### 1. Watches

The most popular type of wrist-watch in use is one with raised dots where each of 12 numbers appears. The number of hands varies with the model, as a second-hand is included on

some models. The top is often made of metal instead of crystal or plastic, and is affixed to the case by a hinge; hence the hands or pointers are protected from injury. In telling time from such a watch the blind man is instructed to use the thumb and not a finger, in order to avoid blunting the sensitiveness of fingers, so precious for reading. This strap-watch may be obtained through the Veterans Administration.

The regular type of watch for the pocket is employed by a few, sometimes with no modifications.

There is an ingenious watch with a "striker" which some are able to afford. On touching an outer button, the number of hours is indicated by a corresponding number of very pleasant notes from a small bell inside. The arrangement for the minutes varies with the model. These "repeaters" are very expensive and get out of repair very easily.

## 2. Clocks

In communities of all sizes there are clocks out of doors which strike the hours and sometimes fractions of hours.

Inside there are clocks of all varieties. Mechanical ones often strike the hours and occasionally other intervals. Electric clocks are many times silent except for the alarm.

Some universities have a special system of musical chimes to denote the passage of time.

## 3. Miscellaneous

You may be one of the lucky people blessed with so marked a sense of time that you know almost to the minute what time it is. There are some blind people who have developed a keen sense of time. This is something to strive for.

When mechanically produced indications are not available, the blind sometimes depend on the effect of the sun. They turn around until it seems warmest, and then gauge the time by the degree of heat on the face.

Rural residents depend on the cries of animals to some extent.

Urban residents find that the passing of certain people (Postman) or of certain vehicles (sprinkler) at fixed times gives them help when in doubt.

Necessity is the mother of invention here as elsewhere, and you may easily develop efficient devices yourself.

## E. HANDLING MONEY

### 1. Banking

The handling of money is a most important part of daily living.

A simple procedure, such as banking, sometimes constitutes quite a problem for the blind person. Each bank has its own requirements for making deposits, withdrawals, and handling checks; but in each transaction the signature of the person involved plays the most important part. When a person cannot sign his own name, most banks require him to make his mark in the presence of two witnesses, while a few banks will accept fingerprints. You can readily understand how awkward and embarrassing such a performance is; so be glad that you can already sign your name, and be sure to keep this ability by exercising it frequently.

In order to sign within a designated space, you will need some assistance from a seeing person, and a guide to help you write in a straight line. A small card carefully placed for the signer about 1/4 inch below the place for the signature is enough of guide for many people. Some carry a small piece of cardboard or metal about 4 inches long and 1 inch wide, with space cut out in the center measuring 1/2 inch by 3 1/2 inches. This can very easily be carried in the pocket or wallet. When this little guide is placed over the space for the signature, you can sign in the cut-out space. In signing or endorsing checks, perhaps the simplest solution is to have someone fold the check at the proper place, and then you can use the resulting crease to keep your signature straight. The use of an indelible pencil is legal, but most banks prefer all signatures in ink.



If you have your own checking account, be sure to have some responsible person fill out the check properly before you add your signature. Also, before you affix your name to any paper requiring a signature, do not fail to have some trustworthy person read the paper to you.

You will be well advised to cash checks, especially small ones, promptly. In the world of finance this businesslike attitude is very much appreciated, and you will gain a good reputation for yourself and for all other blind people if you adopt it.

## 2. Recognition of Coins

You will discover, after a little observation, that coins differ from one another in quality, size, and thickness. The rough milled edges on fairly new dimes and quarters are also excellent clues in distinguishing these coins. Pennies and dimes are often troublesome to differentiate, especially when the pennies are old and worn. For that reason it is wise to keep your pennies separated from your other change. Practise the recognition of coins through the sense of touch until you can pick out the various coins accurately and with a fair amount of speed. If you drop the different coins on a hard surface, you will notice that each has a ring of its own. Learn to recognize the sound of each coin's ring, and then you will have two means of identification.

Still another technic is separating coins for ready use by putting nickels in the right pocket of the trousers, dimes in the opposite pocket, quarters in the lower right pocket of the vest or coat, and pennies in the opposite one. This method is popular when much traveling is done by bus, taxi, or street-car. In cities where tokens are required for fares on various types of vehicles, you may care to reserve a special pocket for them. In sections of the country where silver dollars are in current use, you will probably find it advisable to have on pocket lined with stout cloth or leather in addition to the regular lining.

Another solution is to use a coin purse with a rack for each denomination of coin. Then purse can be kept in any pocket that you find convenient.

## 3. Recognition of Paper Money

A simple arrangement is to put each denomination in a separate compartment of the wallet. For example, ten-dollar bills would be kept in the front, five-dollar bills in the middle, and one-dollar bills in the back.

Another method in vogue is folding down the corner of a bill to indicate that it is a five.

A very sensible precaution of another kind has been adopted by one blind man. He carries two wallets. The wallet exposed to the public gaze for minor expenditures contains only a few one-dollar bills and therefore offers small if any temptation to thieves or pickpockets. In a hip-pocket he carries another wallet containing a larger amount of money; it is separated into fives and tens by folding the fives and putting them in the small compartment on the right usually reserved for cards.

Additional plans include folding each denomination of bill a different way and attaching paper-clips in distinctive positions. For instance, one-dollar bills might be folded across twice; five-dollar bills might be folded lengthwise and then across; ten-dollar bills might be folded across once and then lengthwise, and so forth. One clip on the long side of a bill might indicate that it is a dollar, one clip on the short side that it is five dollars, and one clip in each of these positions that it is ten dollars. The danger of clips is of course that they may slip off and confuse you in transactions.

A word should be said about two-dollar bills. One blind man who has had experience with them suggests folding and filing such bills separately and then exchanging them for ones as soon as possible. If in doubt you should always ask.

When you must present a denomination higher than one dollar, extend the bill so that its amount may be seen easily, mentioning its denomination at the same time. Then, when the receiver acquiesces, let him have the bill.





## 4. Money Orders

If an applicant for a money-order is not able to fill out the application (form 6001), it may be filled out by any employee of the post office. No signature is required when an application for the issuance of a money-order is presented.

If the holder of a money-order is not able to affix his signature under the words "Received payment," he may make his mark (X), followed by the signature of the witness who is personally known to the paying clerk.

Fingerprints cannot be substituted for the written signature on a money-order.

It is preferred that pen and black ink be used in receipting money-orders. This is because signatures written with a pencil are liable to be blurred or possibly obliterated in the necessary handling of the paid voucher in the General Accounting Office.

## F. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

### 1. Handwriting

The process of conquering blindness consists in "pooling" all your resources, both physical and mental, to the best possible advantage. While some of these resources must be trained and cultivated, there are others which have been part of you since your early school days. Chief among the latter is your skill in writing with pencil and pen. This ability is one of the means through which you will continue having a relation of fellowship with your seeing friends and associates.

One way to write straight with a pencil and keep your lines from running together is to fold your paper so as to form creases about 1/4 inch apart. Fold the paper from the bottom upward. Each little channel between the creases will be a line of writing, the creases serving as guides for your finger. Use your left hand as guide for the space between words if you are right-handed.

You may secure a pencil-writing board from the American Printing House for the Blind and the Howe Memorial Press. It consists of a piece of cardboard about the size of an ordinary sheet of writing paper. It is corrugated, so that it looks just like a little washboard, except that the corrugations and grooves are flat. In order to write, you place your paper neatly over the board, fastening it at the top with a paper-clip. As each groove represents a line of writing, press the paper down into the groove with your finger, and then write on the line. This method is neater than the former, as the ridges in the paper are not nearly so pronounced.

In writing very brief notes, some persons do not employ any sort of guide.

Make it a practice to write at least one brief note each day; otherwise the writing skill may be lost. Write your name frequently, so that you will always be able to produce a legible signature.

When you are interrupted in the midst of writing, mark your place with a common pin or thumb-tack, or count the lines which you have written before you leave your paper, so that you may be able to find your own place when you return to your writing. The instant that the interruption takes place, fix in your mind the last thing that you wrote, much as you do when you must leave your typewriter, so that you may resume writing without have to call some sighted person to tell you where you left off.

### 2. Braille

You possess a working knowledge of Braille when you are discharged from the hospital. Your concern therefore, is with practical applications of Braille.

Perhaps the most practical application lies in having a means of reading and writing without recourse to the aid of others. That is, until you become thoroughly accustomed to having things read aloud to you or dictating material to others, you will doubly appreciate the independence furnished you by Braille. This presupposes that prior to your accident you were "eye-minded," taking in things by eye better than by ear, as in reading print or staff-music. In this way your period of transition will be shortened and your lot easier.

Regardless of the type or range of your interests, you will find Braille adaptable for expressing anything in your field. It may be a question of literature, music, mathematics,

weights and measures, and so forth.

What may seem surprising at first glance is that Braille will prove helpful in keeping in touch with your seeing associates. In other words, knowing how to read and write Braille will enable you to keep track of the addresses and telephone numbers of friends, social acquaintances, and customers or clients in business. To file such data, filing cards measuring 4 by 6 inches may be employed, with alphabetical index cards measuring 4 1/2 by 6 inches. The cards may be filed in alphabetical order in a box suited to the size of the cards and the amount of material to be filed. Start your notation on these cards at the upper left-hand corner, as you would in typing or writing by hand. Then turn the cards over, so that the notation appears on the back at the lower left-hand corner. Insert the cards (with the notation running horizontally from left to right) facing away from you. This mode of filing enables you to insert your finger among the cards and read them without removing them from the box. The alphabetical index-cards, being 1/2 inch higher than the others, permit quick reference to the correct section listing the name for which you are looking.

If you are engaged in salesmanship, you will, through Braille, be able to keep a file of data which you could not possibly hope to keep straight in your mind without the aid of systematic records which you yourself can consult. Such information would cover deliveries to be made, stock on hand, amounts due and to be paid out, receipts, and so forth. When filing bulky records pertaining to a person or concern, it is more practical to keep such records on whole sheets of paper in a loose-leaf book. A loose-leaf book consists of two pieces of cardboard (front and back covers) and any desired number of sheets of paper, held together with rings. In such a notebook you keep inserting the accumulating data, arranging them alphabetically, by dates, or in any form best suited to the special requirements of your field. Should you wish to divide your data into sections, you may do so by inserting a narrow strip of cardboard or a blank sheet of paper between each section. If you must carry your loose-leaf book about with you in the course of your business, protect it by keeping it in a cardboard folder. If you keep more than one book, label each cover properly, in order to distinguish one book from the others.

When you have received typewritten and printed matter of importance, you should keep it in the original envelope, with the name of the sender and the date of receipt noted in Braille on the envelope. These envelopes can be preserved in a manner similar to that described for filing cards. In this way you are immediately able to pick out the material to which you may have to refer, without wasting your own time or that of your sighted reader.

When you find it necessary to send a very carefully worded statement or a lengthy report, it is most advantageous to write at least a rough draft in Braille before you proceed to type out your thoughts. This is to keep your ideas organized and to be able to examine just what you are saying. You will find that, whenever possible, it will always be best to be able to look at what you are doing by consulting what you have written in Braille.

Like the cane, the pencil-writing board, the Talking Book, and other devices, Braille is one of the effective weapons at your disposal for breaking out of the encirclement of blindness and achieving its conquest. But the process of becoming proficient in the art of reading and writing Braille, like that of learning how to type, is one which requires your patience and diligence, and the skilled assistance of a competent teacher. The process and methods of learning Braille are, consequently, not dealt with here. Any person of ordinary intelligence, having at least one arm and hand free from disability, can learn to read and write Braille.

Such equipment as the stylus or punch board, slate, pocket slate, and Braille paper may be obtained from the Howe Memorial Press and from the American Printing House for the Blind. There are two types of American machines for writing Braille, though the shortage of metals stopped their manufacture during the recent war. One is the product of the American Foundation for the Blind; the other is the new model developed by the American Printing House for the Blind.

The slate is adaptable to the widest number of purposes. The board slate is useful when you are working in one spot, as at a desk. Its superiority to the average Braille writer (foreign or American) is particularly evident when a written sheet must be reinserted in order to finish filling out a line (as in filling out record forms). It is sometimes difficult to reinsert a sheet in the average mechanical writer so as to get each line of writing exactly where it was before. In addition, the slate and stylus do not need the mechanical care which the writer does, and will last indefinitely if they are not mishandled. The slate is also more economical in that it enables one to write to the very bottom of a sheet of paper. No informed person, however, would deny the two greatest disadvantages attending its use. One is the fact that the writing must be done from



right to left. The other is that the use of the stylus is tiring to the hand. A minor disadvantage is the dropping of the stylus, which with the perversity of inanimate objects seems to take delight in eluding one's grasp.

The pocket slate is so named because it may be carried in your pocket quite conveniently. It comes in several sizes. The 19-cell, 6-line slate is exceedingly useful, for it fits most comfortably into your pocket and filing-card fits into it perfectly. Hence this size of slate is ideally suited for any business in which you must record data as you travel about. There is also the 27-cell, 4-line slate. While writing with a pocket slate you must rest it on a flat surface.

The chief advantages of the writer are: (1) greater speed and less fatigue when writing steadily and at length; (2) the opportunity to check what has been written without removing the paper and turning it over; (3) the ability to write from left to right; and (4) finding one's place instantly if one has been interrupted. No Braille writer light enough in weight to be carried about conveniently has thus far been perfected.

#### a. Alternatives

When you cannot put things into Braille yourself, find out if your local chapter of the American Red Cross or some church in your community has volunteers available to do your transcribing. If not, perhaps some member of your family can learn Braille and serve as your secretary.

### 3. Typing

Typewriting is a skill of special value to the blind, since its advantages are so many in number.

In a few short lessons the enthusiastic and industrious learner will find himself able to type his own letters and thus gain privacy and independence in transacting personal affairs and business.

Ediphone and dictaphone transcribing machines offer many possibilities to one who might be interested in typing as a vocation. The problem of what to type is solved by the blind typist's listening to a waxed cylinder on which are recorded manuscripts, business letters, medical reports, and so forth. Innumerable blind typists are scattered through the world of business, holding this and other types of positions in which typewriting enables them to increase their earning capacity.

Pencil writing very often becomes an arduous task, especially if the matter to be written is of any length. Being able to type will lighten the task considerably and the resulting paper will be neater and more easily read.

### 4. Dialing the Telephone

The telephone is an important aid to a blinded or blind person. For that reason every visually handicapped person should know how to operate one. Even if the dial system has not yet been installed in the section of the country where you now live, the time when it will be introduced is not far distant. It would therefore be wise to learn how to dial your own numbers immediately and become that much more independent of sighted aid. If you ask a person with sight to dial a number for you, nine times out of ten he will feel it his privilege to stand by and listen to your conversation. Avoid that annoyance and embarrassment, and master this very simple operation yourself.

At present every known dial has finger holes around its outer edge, arranged in a circle. These are numbered consecutively from 1, (which is in the first hole) to zero (which is in the tenth hole). Each of eight holes, starting with the second and ending with the ninth, also controls three letters of the alphabet, thus: the second hole operates number 2 and the letters A, B, C; the third hole operates number 3 and the letters D, E, F, and so forth. Q is omitted entirely; the seventh hole therefore operates number 7 and the letters P, R, S. The tenth hole covers Z, operator, and zero. Both numbers and letters run counterclockwise.

To dial, place the five fingers of the right hand in the first five holes of the dial, the little finger in number 1 and the thumb in number 5. Remove all the fingers from the holes except the one in the number to be dialed. For example, if you wish to dial number 3, remove all the fingers from their holes except the middle finger. Draw the dial back (upward or clockwise) until the middle finger touches the stop; then let the dial return to its normal position with the middle finger still remaining in the hole. Be careful never to retard the dial's regular rate of speed. The fingers can then return to their positions in the holes very easily.

As it is very awkward to place the fingers of the left hand in the holes in a similar manner, unless you are left-handed, a different method must be used for dialing numbers 6 through zero. Use the index finger of the left hand to dial these numbers. Locate 6 and 7 by counting from the thumb, which is in number 5; locate zero, 9, and 8 by counting from the stop next to the zero. Whenever possible, use one number to guide you to the next. If you have just dialed a 7 and the next number is a 6, let your finger remain in the seventh hole as the dial returns to normal, and then just slide over one hole to the 6.

To complete a call, a series of numbers must be dialed. The average person cannot readily remember more than four numbers. In many cities and large communities the names of exchanges are therefore used. Here the first three letters of the name of the exchange are dialed and then a given number is dialed. In several of the largest cities (as in New York) one dials the first two letters of the name of the exchange, followed by a given number.

Fix firmly in your mind two groups of letters as keys: A, B, C in the second hole, and M, N, O in the sixth. It will then be comparatively easy to locate any letter by using these keys as starting points. Until you become quite expert at dialing, before you remove the receiver from the hook it will be well to figure out what numbers represent the letters you are going to dial.

Unless numbers are dialed in fairly rapid succession, and at an even rate of speed, wrong connections are likely to occur, or there may be no connection at all.

Try not to confuse the letter O (in the sixth hole) with the number zero (in the tenth hole).

In an emergency, it is always possible to call the operator and explain your predicament; the proper hole to use in calling the operator is the bottom or tenth one, which controls Z and zero as well.

## G. READING FOR RECREATION AND INFORMATION

### 1. Braille

#### a. Recreation

Braille is useful not only for business and for social ends; it can serve you in your moments of leisure, for there is reading matter in Braille ranging from the tragedies of Shakespeare to the detective stories of Ellery Queen.

Braille can keep you abreast of current events and thought. Such periodicals as the Reader's Digest and the Catholic Digest are already issued in Braille, and other well known magazines will be embossed. Information on this subject may be obtained by writing to the American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville, Kentucky.

#### b. Information

Braille can also serve you for reading or for making your own notes if you are taking courses at some institution of learning. If your lending library does not have the books required for your courses, follow the suggestions made earlier in this chapter under "Alternatives." If they do not prove feasible and someone must read to you, you may apply to the Veterans' Administration for the services of a reader.

#### c. Borrowing

All embossed books and magazines may be borrowed free of charge from your nearest library which handles Braille. Your local librarian will be more than glad to assist you in making selections. Books and periodicals are carried free through the mail.



There is every reason to stress the importance of personal contact with librarians, either by letters or interviews. Librarians who know your tastes will be glad to notify you of new publications of special interest to you. This is essential for you to know in view of the fact that catalogues cannot be kept up to date.

## 2. Talking Book

For recreational reading, the Talking Book is an excellent supplement to Braille. It consists of a machine whose turn table is constructed to revolve more slowly than that of the ordinary record player. Each record plays for half an hour, and the reading is done at average speed. Books of a fictional nature, biographies, plays, and others are recorded by professional readers. To obtain a machine, apply first to the local office of the Veterans' Administration; if you are unable to secure one through this channel, and application may be made to the American Foundation for the Blind. Records are available for loan from your Braille library; send the serial number of your Talking Book to the librarian when you make your application for records.

## H. EXERCISE AND SPORTS

Everyone would like to have good health and you will be no exception. It is hardly necessary to remind you that exercise, sleep, and eating enough of the proper food are the mainstays of health.

Exercise is of the highest importance to any blinded veteran for special reasons. It makes for mental and physical equilibrium, relieving nervousness, creating a good appetite, affording sound sleep, and proving a social asset. If you have taken a brisk walk before a meal, you will feel more like eating and like eating more. If you have learned to wrestle you will find walking easier, and if you wrestle on a team you will gain social prestige as an active member of your community. Faced as you are with the problem of learning new tactics quickly at a time when a brake has seemingly been applied to your freedom of movement, you will more than ever need the mental alertness which is one reward of exercise and sports.

### 1. Exercise

There are plenty of exercises which you can do by yourself in your own room to keep fit.

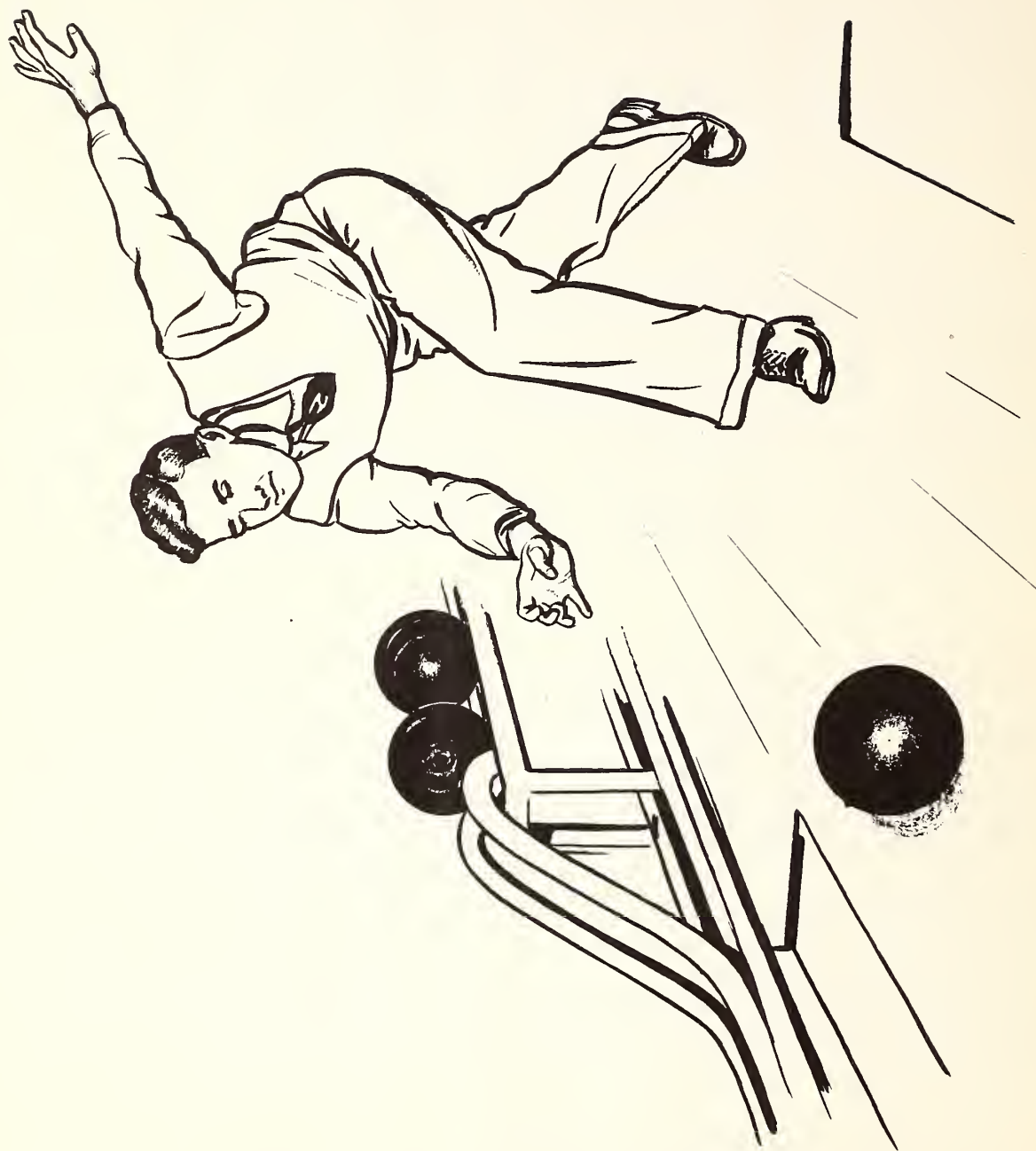
You can preserve your good posture through abdominal retraction by stretching on the floor, or by standing against a wall and exercising. Or you can retain correct posture when seated through exercises in breathing with the diaphragm, or in stretching the ribs on each side alternately. Then you can try sitting down or standing and bending your trunk forward as if your spine were a straight rod. Another simple exercise is standing, raising the arms upward and forward to form an angle of 45 degrees with the trunk, rising on the toes, and stretching tall from the fingertips; then you might practise walking on tiptoe around your room while holding your arms in the same position. After that you can try bending your knees upward alternately while raising your arms forward and upward again, to tone up your muscles. You can easily think of variations yourself, perhaps hands on head, hands on shoulder, lunging, lying on your back and pretending to ride a bicycle, skipping rope, and so on, since you have already done plenty of setting-up exercises in the past.

If there is a gymnasium in your community, you will of course have access to apparatus and perhaps be able to join in the activities of groups. If not, you might get a machine for exercising and have your work-out at home.

### 2. Sports

You can develop a new code of life through the relearning of skills and the development of ability to move about independently. Remember that you can have fun while learning to adapt yourself to a new situation, and that your spirit will help you to prove yourself a worthwhile member of society.





The types of sports available to you will probably depend on the location of your home. Here are some sports you might like to investigate and what to expect if you take part in them.

Swimming is a sport in which the blind can engage both as a recreational activity and as a competitive sport. Until a blind man is familiar with the locale, he should ask for guidance. Indoors the first step is to walk around the outer edge of the pool, in order to get a conception of the width and length. Then inspect the ladders and any other fixed objects that will help you get your bearings when you come to the surface of the water after diving. For instance, the diving-board is pointed out because all swimmers continuously use the board, and it serves as an ideal guide. In the use of the board, a blind man should be taught to walk cautiously out to its end and to fall forward into the water until he gets the feel of the distance to the water. One hazard is eliminated if you come to the surface immediately and turn to the right or left and swim to the wall; the next diver cannot then land on top of you. Underwater swimming must be treated as a special event and done only after others are out of the pool. When someone calls out signals it helps you to develop swimming more than one length of the pool.

Fundamentals of amateur wrestling are practised on the large mat. Your first action is to revert to a commando maneuver or jui-jitsu maneuver, which will stand out in your mind from combat-training. Then you learn three or four take-down holds when both opponents are standing. Various escape holds and reversal-of-position holds are next used. Finally you are taught a few methods of controlling the man who is underneath. Because amateur wrestling is the most vigorous of all sports, you must be careful not to work too hard or to receive strains through overexertion.

Other real possibilities are track, jumping, baseball, boxing, fencing, riding horseback, bicycling, rowing, skating, bowling, and hiking. Try them all with guidance to see which you enjoy most and those in which you can excel.





# CHAPTER IV— VOCATIONAL OUTLOOK

## A. INTRODUCTION

The desire for economic security is one of the most deep-seated of human aspirations. As a human being you will therefore wish to make sure of an adequate income for the present and future. As a veteran your peace of mind on this score will be helped by the knowledge that your pension will to some extent care for the economic factor. A pension will buy certain things, to be sure, but do not let it buy your initiative. Continue to be a wage-earner, so that you and your family may maintain a higher standard of living, and so that you can keep your self-respect.

Before your discharge you were given educational and vocational advice, and you were told what aid you might expect from agencies handling rehabilitation. In addition, you may have heard from your union or your last employer that your pre-war job is waiting for you. Should you not choose to go back to your old job, though, a different course of action is indicated.

Assuming that you do wish a new job, your first thought will naturally be to wonder what vocational opportunities there are for the blind, because you will be honest enough to recognize that certain fields of endeavor (proofreading or driving a truck) would be out of the question.

The way has been paved for you by the blind who have demonstrated what they can do when given a chance. These jobs may be in a field previously untried by you as a civilian, or they may come under the heading of new skills acquired by you while in service. For example, you may have learned a new trade or had a taste of executive responsibility during military service. You may have become so interested in this new type of work that you will prefer it to your pre-war occupation, even if the latter is still possible. Another point to bear in mind is locality; do you wish to remain in your home town at any cost, or are you willing to move to a new community if you can thereby better yourself? It will be well for you to consult your family and also agencies in your community. There are bound to be ties and habits needing consideration by all members of a family, and regional interests call for careful weighing before a decision is made to move elsewhere. Try to give these matters your unbiased consideration in arriving at your decision, for the formation of definite plans will diminish any sense of frustration and aid mental health. There are five important factors to be taken into consideration when making your vocational choice; the nature of work meeting your present needs; brushing up on old skills or learning new ones; charting your interests; respecting the findings of aptitude tests; and making yourself try the job out.

### Training for Jobs

Any realistic approach to securing work involves a knowledge of the scope of the job under consideration. If you should find that there are forgotten or unfamiliar elements, you may find it advisable to take refresher courses in order to keep abreast of advances made during your absence from the country, or to receive special training. Counselors have already pointed out the difficulty experienced by some veterans in reacquiring the proper habits of study; forewarned is forearmed, and so be prepared for a lag in getting back to the use of textbooks. Remember at the same time, though, that the instructor is on your side; his one desire is to make your educational experience profitable and of lasting value. All such programs of training are geared to your individual needs in the light of current opportunities for employment.

## B. CHARTING YOUR INTERESTS

"I know what I like" is a familiar declaration on the lips of Americans. Being one, you probably know exactly where your vocational interests lie. For example, you no doubt have a definite preference for mechanics or music, for working by yourself or with others, and for following the beaten track or blazing new trails.

Your first step will therefore be to find out what jobs are available to you, and your second to decide which of them appeals most to you. If you can find a job both within your capacities and to your liking, you will be ideally situated. If you should not be so fortunate, though, further steps will be necessary.



You will have to subject yourself to some self-analysis. What kind of personality do you have? Are you reserved or genial? Do you get absorbed in problems (puzzles, repair of radios) or do you find it hard to concentrate? Are you easily annoyed or do you take everything in your stride? Do you like responsibility or do you prefer to follow directions? Do you require variety, or can you face routines without flinching? Do you need all the comforts of life to be happy, or can you enjoy a simple life? Are you inclined to live within your income or beyond it? Is your preference for life and work in the city or in the country?

There may be new outlets for your capacities, outlets undreamed of by you. Interests may assert themselves as the result of accidental encounters with informed specialists bringing you a new viewpoint. Latent talents may be brought to the surface by a trained interviewer, with the result that you will set up new goals of achievement.

### C. VALUE OF WORK TRIALS

One way to find out whether or not you have aptitude for jobs open to you is to take the standard tests to establish or eliminate the presence of your aptitude. Such tests are objective and involve no favoritism. They cover all fields and will aid you in the proper selection of your professional interests, whether they be political or industrial.

The acid test of aptitude for any career is how the individual succeeds when he gives the career a trial over a certain period. By observing at first hand the actual operation in the field of your interest you can test the soundness of your choice. You may improve faster than you think, and confidence will come as you improve.

Many companies now employ the blind on a temporary basis, with the assurance of continued employment if the workers meet standards for employment in the special field under consideration.

The experience of proving one's worth is a challenge which brings out one's sense of competition, a strong motive in many fields. You will be well repaid for your willingness to back up your claims to meriting employment of a given kind by a reasonable try-out period. If you succeed, you will know what line of work to follow; if you fail, you will have eliminated an unsuitable position from your list of choices. By being associated with those more experienced than yourself, you may pick up many "tricks of the trade" which will lighten your task as time goes by.

There are many jobs open to the blind. The U.S.E.S., the V.A. and local blind agencies will keep you posted on trends and openings. Use their services for your own needs. It is for this that such organizations exist.

No matter how humble the task that falls to your lot, doing it uncommonly well is sure to bring you success and pride in that success.





# CHAPTER V- LEGISLATION AND WHERE TO GET SERVICE

Two thoughts are bound to be uppermost in your mind, what rights and benefits accrue to you as a veteran and as a blinded man, and where to get service. The two subjects are closely related, and so they are grouped in one chapter. All statements made are accurate as of November, 1945, but the future may of course bring new or amended legislation and service for your benefit. It will therefore be to your advantage to keep posted as to such developments.

## A. LEGISLATION

### 1. "G.I. Bill of Rights"

The Service-men's Readjustment Law, dating from June of 1944, was designed to give "emphatic notice to the men and women in our armed forces that the American people do not intend to let them down." Its broad program covers four types of benefits: individual grants for training and education; loans to establish homes or businesses; improved machinery for vocational guidance and for finding employment; and unemployment allowances up to a maximum period of 1 year.

Your chief interest in this law as it applies to you may well be in the part covering the Veterans' Administration. The services handled by the latter are taken up in the portion of this chapter devoted to where to get service.

### 2. Income tax

You may have wondered if blindness would affect your income tax. The law reads that, after 31 December 1943 a special deduction of \$500 is allowed to blind individuals. They qualify for the deduction if they were blind on 1 July of the tax year. If their tax-year does not include 1 July, they can qualify if blind on the last day of their tax year.

Since "blind individual" is a highly technical term, you must check with your doctor. In the eyes of the law you are blind only (1) if central visual acuity does not exceed 20/200 in the better eye with correcting lenses, or (2) if your visual acuity is greater than 20/200 but is accompanied by a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees.

The deduction is not allowable for a blind dependent. There you get only the one exemption of \$500 for the dependent.

In the case of a joint return, if both husband and wife are blind individuals, an extra deduction of \$1,000 is allowable.

If only the husband or wife is blind, only \$500 may be deducted.

The special deduction is in addition to the personal exemption, the credit for dependents, and all other allowable deductions.

Form 1040 is now available in grade 1 1/2 Braille and grade 2 Braille. It is supplied free of charge on application to Miss Alice Rohrback, Chief, Braille Transcribing Section, Books for the Adult Blind, Library of Congress, Washington 25, D.C.

### 3. Travel

The laws regarding travel vary with the mode, class, and State. The American Foundation for the Blind, Inc. (15 West Sixteenth Street, New York 11, N.Y.) handles applications for one-fare concessions, as explained in two pamphlets for which you should send. One is entitled "Instructions for Obtaining the Reduced Rate Concessions for Blind Persons and Attendants on the Railroads." The other is called "Instructions for Obtaining the Reduced Rate Concession on the Busses for Blind Person and Guide."

#### a. On Trains

A one-fare concession is granted by many railroads to enable a blind person to take a seeing attendant with him without paying more than one fare. It is not a half-fare rate for one blind person traveling alone, or for two blind persons traveling together without a guide.

This reduced rate is granted when the "financial situation merits the concession." The applicant must be (1) totally blind, or (2) partially sighted but with sight so defective that it necessitates the attendance of a guide in unfamiliar surroundings.

The types of fares governed by the concession (first class, coach, or tourist) vary with the section of the United States, but most lines grant the general one-fare privilege. The laws of two States (Missouri and Pennsylvania) do not permit the concession for fares between two points within the State. Special conditions of the same type govern travel in Canada.

Application may be made to the American Foundation for the Blind. Accompanying the application for a book of 25 coupons should be two photographs, a letter of reference, and 25 cents.

#### b. On Busses.

With the exception of the price of tickets, practically the same privilege applies to travel on busses. The blind person and his guide will be granted a one-fare concession by some companies, but will be required to pay 1 1/2 times the full fare by other companies.

The matter is handled by the American Foundation for the Blind.

#### c. With Dogs

Under Public Law 309, 78th Congress, the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs is authorized (under such regulations as he may prescribe) to provide guide-dogs trained for the aid of blind veterans who are entitled to disability-compensation under laws administered by the Veterans' Administrator. The Veterans' Administrator is also authorized to pay all necessary expenses of travel to and from your home to secure the dog and any expenses incurred in becoming adjusted to the dog.

There are several private organizations which train guide dogs. Information concerning the steps necessary to secure guide dogs may be obtained by writing to the Veterans' Administration.

### 4. Education

Two laws have been passed to provide for vocational rehabilitation and/or education.

Public Law 16, 78th Congress (approved March 24, 1943); extends the activities of the Veterans' Administration to include vocational rehabilitation.

Public Law 346, 78th Congress, devoted principally to eligibility for education or training and to benefits, and information as to benefits under these laws, may be secured by writing to your regional Veterans' Administration office or consulting the representatives in the hospital.

### B. WHERE TO GET SERVICE

There are many types of service available to you, and consequently many headquarters for such service. Both civilian and military agencies are in existence. Probably their number will increase as time goes on and you will be well-advised if you try to keep abreast of such expansion.



## 1. Civilian Agencies

### a. Braille equipment

Appliances and supplies for the use of Braille may be obtained from two sources. One is the American Printing House for the Blind, 1839 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky. The other is the Howe Memorial Press, 549 East Fourth Street, South Boston, Massachusetts. Apply for a price list in each case.

### b. Schools for the Blind

It is worth your while to know whether or not there is a school for the blind in your State, for you may wish to obtain information as to special methods of education and training to adopt in furthering your own studies or in carrying on a business. The existing schools are listed by State on pages 139 and 140 of the 1945 edition of the "Directory of Activities for the Blind in the United States and Canada," published by the American Foundation for the Blind.

### c. Presses for the Blind

The addresses of printers and publishers will likewise prove welcome for reference. They are listed geographically on page 138 of the "Directory" just quoted.

### d. Libraries for the Blind

The large number of libraries for the blind will make it easy for you to obtain literature to suit your taste. The majority of them are distributing libraries for the Library of Congress. Their location by State appears on pages 136 and 137 of the Directory of Activities for the Blind in the United States.

### e. Private Agencies

The American Foundation for the Blind, Inc., which serves North America, has as its purpose the promotion of the interests of the blind. Its many activities include: research (on education, vocational opportunities, statistics, legislation, mechanical appliances, methods of publishing, the Talking Book); consultation (advice as to education, vocations, legislation, statistical records); field-service (assistance in presenting the needs of the blind to government officials, legislators, and the public; organization of new activities on behalf of the blind where needed; surveys of existing services); service to blind individuals (information and advice, scholarships, arrangements for reduced fares in travel, discount service applying to various types of equipment, sale at cost of reproducers for using the Talking Book and of machines for writing Braille); publications (the magazine Outlook for the Blind in Braille and inkprint, the magazine Talking Book Topics in inkprint and recorded form, the Braille Book Review in Braille, and books and pamphlets of professional interest to workers for the blind); the services of a reference library (books, pamphlets, manuscripts); professional development (training through institutes for social workers, summer school for negro teachers, employment bureau covering personnel for schools for the blind and agencies for the adult blind); and National Industries for the Blind (an affiliated organization which works with the Government in allocating its orders to workshops for the blind and with local agencies in promoting the employment of the blind). The address is 15 West Sixteenth Street, New York 11, N.Y.

The American Printing House for the Blind, Inc., serves the United States and its Territories. It is maintained by an annual Congressional appropriation to supply embossed books and tangible apparatus for promoting the education of the blind. The books and magazines published by it are of course in Braille, and one magazine (The Reader's Digest) is reproduced for the Talking Book as well. It also manufactures Talking Books and tangible apparatus and maintains a library for students. You should address this printery at 1839 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky.

The agency entitled "National Society for the Blind, Inc.," is located in room 727 of the Woodward Building, Washington, D.C. Its services are national in scope. It publishes factual data on placement and it reports on Federal legislation pertaining to the blind.

#### f. Public Agencies

Vocational Rehabilitation Service has an agency, usually bearing the same name, in each of the 48 States and in the District of Columbia. The services rendered vary with the branch, and they are accordingly noted individually on pages 19 to 105 of the sixth edition of the "Directory of Activities for the Blind in the United States and Canada."

U.S.E.S. is an abbreviation for United States Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission. It maintains offices throughout the country, and you will have no difficulty in locating one in or near your community.

### 2. Federal Agencies

The Veterans' Administration, Washington 25, D.C., is the most important agency for your use. The Veterans' Administration will provide necessary reader services for the vocational rehabilitation and/or education of a blinded veteran entitled to it under Public Laws 16 and 346. If such articles as canes or watches are needed, they can be secured when the veteran registers his request through the Regional Office, after which the matter is routine in checking the need and complying with the request if approved. Guide service would be provided only for cases being authorized by the Veterans' Administration for official travel. The procedure in applying for aid is (1) to file your request for the desired article or service with the Regional Office of the Veterans' Administration in the territory where you reside, and (2) to file the forms necessary for the office to proceed on the request. Send to the central office for a list of regional offices for your reference.

The Veterans' Administration has already provided and is continuing to provide "facilities" or hospitals for after-care of veterans. The facilities and their location can be secured by writing to the central office in Washington, D.C.

You should make a note of the following. The office of the Surgeon General of the United States Army is at 18th and H Streets, Washington, D.C. The office of the Surgeon General of the United States Navy is in the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Potomac Annex, Washington 25, D.C. The office of the Surgeon General of U.S. Public Health Service is to be found in Federal Security Agency, Washington, D.C.

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